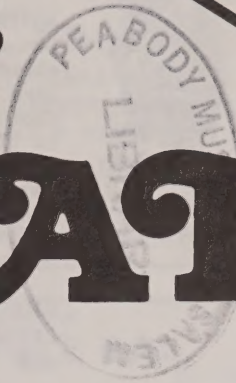


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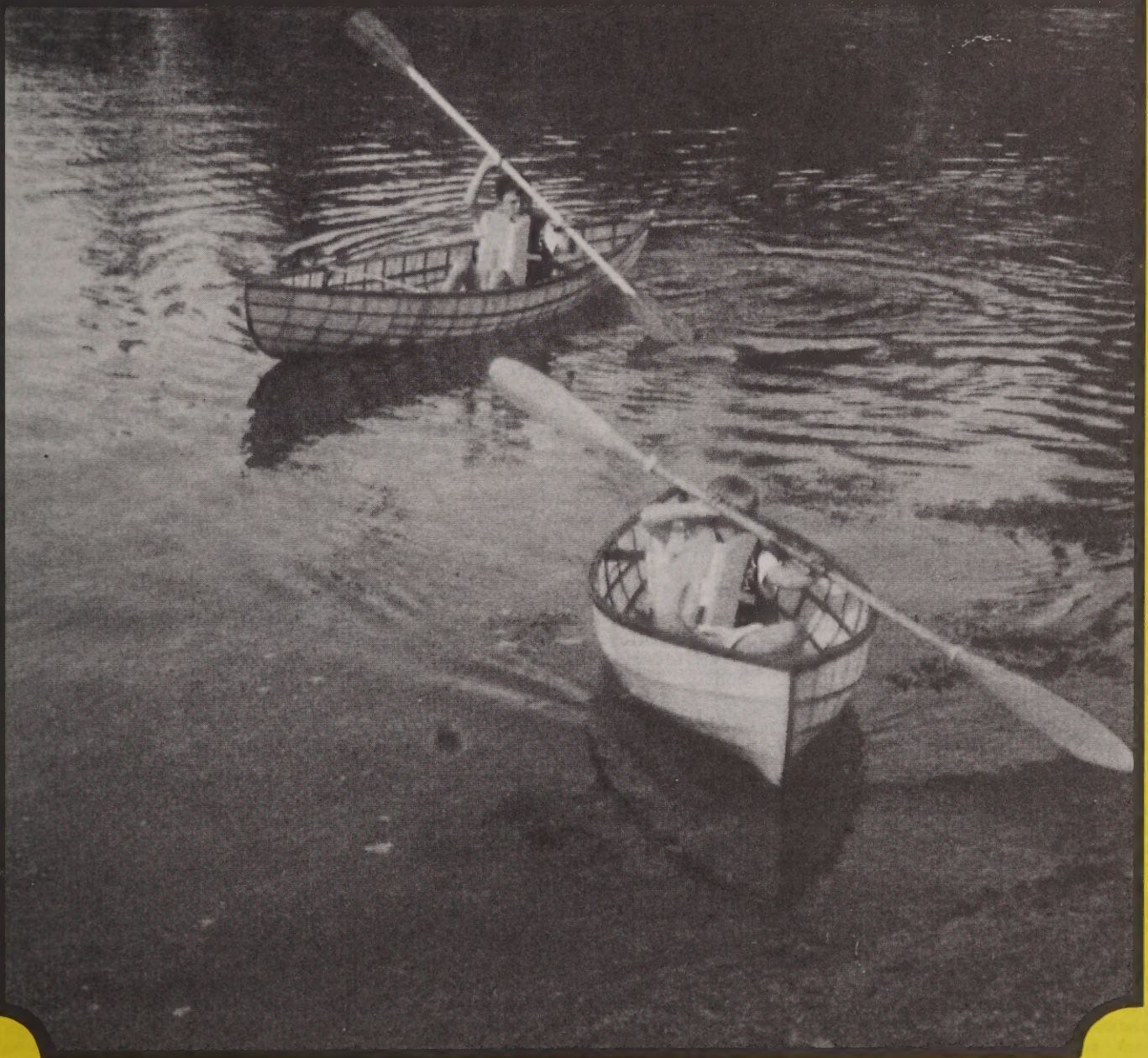


# **messing about in BOATS**



*Volume 9 - Number 17*

*January 15, 1992*





# COMMENTARY



messing  
about in

## BOATS

Published twice a month, 24 times a year. Subscription price is \$20 for 24 issues.

Address is "Boats", 29 Burley St., Wenham., MA 01984.

Telephone is (508) 774-0906.

Publisher & Editor, Bob Hicks

## Our Next Issue...

Will bring you a report on the 1st Annual Bridges Point 24 "World Championships" from Kent Mullican; newspaper reports about two crazy Frenchmen who rowed across the oceans last summer; and Kenneth Wade's account of his 44th birthday introduction to sea kayaking. We also should get Gail Ferris' arctic adventure tale underway at last. We'll have a look at the Hampton One Design 18' daysailer, the Frost Fish iceboat and Jim Betts' 14' ocean racer, "So-Du-It". Forest Phelps will tell us about setting up his CD-10 for sailing, and we'll hear how boatbuilders Hadden & Stevens thought they'd died and gone to heaven when they moved into their new waterfront shop on the Maine coast. David Mainwaring's "Musings on Maritime Museums & Models" will accompany our reviews of Mike O'Brien's new magazine, "Boat Design Quarterly" and Carret Conover's book, "Beyond the Paddle".

## On the Cover...

"Happy Messing About in 1992" was the message accompanying Betsy Woodward's photo of her 5 year old niece and 10 year old nephew enjoying her geodesic canoes last summer in Maine, a nice reminder that a new season is ahead.

### COMMENTARY

Increasingly readers are writing to express their comments on significant aspects of messing about in boats, and I have decided to turn over this page occasionally to those meriting greater exposure than is offered on the "Your Commentary" pages. In recent issues Dave Getchell, Sr. and Gard Callanen presented opinions on the Maine Island Trail and the state of small boatbuilder shows.

### SMALL BOATING IS PART OF THE DISSATISFACTION WITH CONSUMERISM

It hasn't been much fun watching the world and this country fall apart bit by bit this past year. As a small boat designer and builder, I keep reminding myself that many classic boats were conceived and built during the Great Depression of the '30's. I think now that the limitations imposed by our contemporary circumstances are really a challenge to come up with boats that meet the criteria of modest size and cost, and that lead one's fantasy to use them in a non-aggressive way that does less damage to the psyche and the environment than the "Consumer Culture" water cars, water motorcycles and water RV's.

As silly as it may seem at first, I think that pleasure boating is an important point from which to view many of our cultural ills and a good place to aim for change. What people do with their free time is one of the best indicators of their priorities and values. It isn't just the noise and congestion of the fleets of floating sedans and the buzzing spirals of jetskis that cause offense; it's the spiritual nullity of these activities that bruises the heart.

As we are now led to believe that to "shop" is not only divine but patriotic, I have been thinking about alternatives to this bankrupt consumerism. Communism is dead but we have slowly been coming to understand that its passing brings us no great joy. Perhaps this is because the struggle of those millions to come out from under the crushing weight of oppression shames us by highlighting how we blithely continue to accept a form of oppression here under our system of "Corporate Consumerism".

What does this have to do with a small boat designer/builder, or with a one-man-band boat magazine? I think it has a lot to do with us. I think that my efforts and yours, and those of all the small builders and owners are a part of the dissatisfaction with consumerism and the fiscal, and now spiritual,

bankruptcy that it has created. When people turn to individuals and small establishments to fulfill their needs, they weaken the hold the corporate world tries to maintain over us through mass media and mass merchandising outlets.

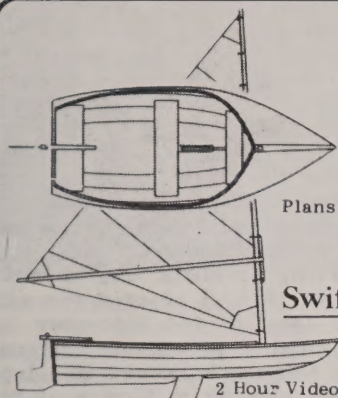
These individual actions also re-establish a level of personal communication and inter-dependency that cuts through the anonymity and dislocation of responsibilities that one gets in the mass marketplace. When people deal directly with each other, they must start to make their own judgements about quality and what is important. There is no commercial to fill them with ready-made opinions and values. They begin to see that there can be life outside of the car/office/car/mall cycle. They learn to appreciate creativity in others, and also in themselves as they take control of their lives. Finally they begin to see that there is a possibility for positive change beyond the "hopeless" sets of questions and crises used to keep us both anxious and apathetic.

The one aspect of this general condition that is most specifically addressed by the small boater is the environmental situation. Behind the windshield of a Cigarette boat at 75 knots, the great outdoors looks perfectly fine. In fact, it looks just like a beer commercial. So, what's all the fuss about? However, from a kayak, canoe or small sailboat, the view is very different. First, your experience is your own, not a re-enactment of a television image. You have to think for yourself and make your own judgements. Also, you can readily see what the situation is. Are there birds, fish or seals around? How many plastic bags and pieces of styrofoam have you come across? Does that band of rust colored smog extend even further offshore than it did last year?

At this point you are in a position to see for yourself. You are in the mood to do so, and you have also made the first step in doing something about the situation. When you choose a small boat for your pleasure, you have chosen to make that first break with your gasoline addiction. You have bought something fairly major that didn't come out of a mall or a car lot. Perhaps you have even made something substantial and beautiful with your own hands. It may not seem revolutionary, but it is one of the few ways now available to make small but substantial changes in our lives and attitudes.

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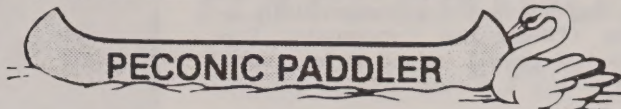
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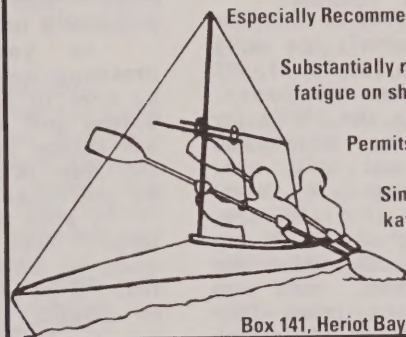
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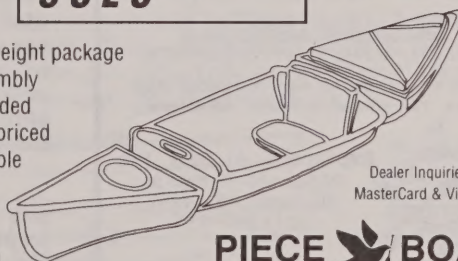
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## CREDIT WHERE DUE

The article by Chris Kulczycki in the November 15th issue ("Designing Compounded Plywood Kayaks") raised a few points on which I should like to comment if I may.

It was not I, but the Wooden Boat School, that coined the phrase "tortured plywood". They stated thusly, "Learn to torture plywood, then paddle it!" I have always referred to the method as the "DK Method" since, so far as I know, I invented it in the early 1960's, and anyone using it for commercial purposes, such as Chris, is in fact infringing on my copyright and should be paying royalties. I mention this, not with a view to obtaining royalties (a fruitless task, depending as it does upon the conscience of the builder) but to keep the record straight.

As to his comment on the "intrusive plywood frames"; the early DK designs, such as the DK 13, DK 14, and the DK 16 two seat kayak, were all designed in the 1960's for simplicity in building, which was why they used, and still use, ply-on-edge deck frames. My latest designs, such as the DK 20, 19'9"x25" sculling shell, DK 21 sea kayak, and the DK 22 slalom dimensioned fun kayak, each use laminated deck beams taken from the two 8'x4' sheets of ply which each boat requires. Construction of the DK 22 was shown very fully in the photographs published in the October 15, 1989 issue of "Boats".

It is flattering that Chris agrees with me, and many thousands of enthusiastic DK builders spread around the world, that the DK Method is the best way of constructing small craft where it is suitable, but I think he is less than generous in giving credit for the origins of his designs.

Dennis Davis, Devon, England



## SUMMER'S HERE

As your "maintenance and dreaming season" arrives, think of us here in Australia with our blue waters and warm winds. While our wet season is also coming, at least the rain is warm rain. Great for my sea kayaking.

I still haven't gotten my "Car-topper" into the water. I thought when we moved into our new house that I'd be able to get on with other things. Ha! But the days are getting longer and soon I get my six weeks of vacation. My friend Ross has moved down the coast a ways from me and so now between us we have some stunning cruising grounds to explore.

Ian Hamilton, Mackay, Australia

## REPRINT "THE BEST OF SBJ"?

A few weeks ago I struck oil; I found 50 issues of the old "SBJ" at a yard sale for \$5. I'm gradually devouring them, most of their content is timeless. I was thus interested in the recent burst of nostalgia for "SBJ" and the suggestions that you take up the slack. I do understand the problems you would face in this in the matter of time and money.

Then it occurred to me, why not seek permission to reprint "The Best of SBJ"? My guess is that it would be brand new stuff for most of your subscribers. I agree with Dick Randall's letter in the November 15th issue that "messaging about" to me has more to do with repair, maintenance, innovations, seamanship, line lore, mooring tips, ideas for oar hold-downs, etc.

Paul Stimson, Royal Oak, MD

ED NOTE: "SBJ" is not gone, but rather has adopted a different focus on boating, and all that good old stuff from bygone days is still a valuable asset for the present owners, and is unlikely to be available to us. If at all, it would likely be at a fee we could not afford.

## SMALL BOATS & BACKWATERS

Having messed about in boats for over 60 years, from kayaks to ocean racers, I feel your approach is the right one. The older I get the more I enjoy being close to the water in small boats. I do enjoy designing big boats for people with big ideas, but my own interests will always be in small boats and unexplored backwaters.

Having cruised the Norfolk Broads in 1970, I enjoyed the article on them in the September 1st issue, which I picked up at Mystic Seaport Museum Bookstore and lugged home with me to Florida. I had a boat chartered there for last summer myself but ended up in the hospital instead and missed seeing the old country.

Walt Scott N.A., Indian Rocks Beach, FL.

## DELIGHT IN "THE DAMN FOOLE"

Rarely has a written work captured so well the whimsy and delight along with the just plain curmudgeonliness of many of us who mess about in boats. Bravo to Tom! I anxiously await future installments.

Bette Low, S. Dartmouth, MA

## APPEAL TO A BROAD SPECTRUM

Your magazine is marvelous. Your articles and stories are well written and appeal to a broad spectrum of boating enthusiasts, amateurs, wannabees, and dilettantes. There is always a feeling of the personal in the articles.

T.C. Mencher, New York, NY.

## DIDN'T EXPECT MUCH

Not having ever seen your magazine when I read of it in "Wooden Boat", I didn't expect much at the \$20 price for 24 issues. But after receiving four issues I was quite pleased. I like the mix of stories about people using boats, along with those on the various types of boats. I also like Bolger's comments on his designs and wish you could give him more space for more comments.

May I suggest that at boat meets you attend you select a most interesting boat and shoot some closeup photos of it, or of interesting gadgets or construction details. And for icing on this cake, perhaps sometimes plans for building a small boat like a skiff.

Ernest Brock, Houston, TX.

ED. NOTE. Phil Bolger can have more space anytime he feels motivated to write more, it's a labor of love on his behalf. Plans for building a boat are normally the property of the designer and as such are offered for sale to potential builders. The most likely source for a free design to publish would be from old boating publications with copyrights long since expired.

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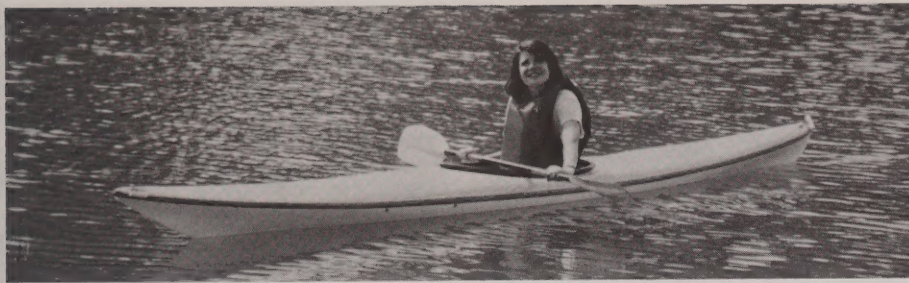


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#### MEET "POQUITO GRANDE"

The "Poquito Grande" is the lengthened version of the original "Poquito". It is 14'x20" with a slightly larger cockpit. Designed by Andy Singer to carry an adult, while still retaining the fine behavior of the original smaller boat, this is a great little kayak. Several weeks ago Mindy and I paddled this kayak on our local lake and found it was more stable and drier than its predecessor. It was also

slightly faster and more comfortable, but did require a bit more effort to get it going. We believe this boat is going to be just right for small adults, especially women.

David Bolduc, Greensboro, NC

ED. NOTE: "Poquito" and "Poquito Grande" are available from Wilderness Systems, 241 Woodbine St., High Point, NC 27260, (919) 883-7410.

#### NON-DISCRETIONARY BOAT THERAPY

I have been out of work for over a year and we have cut back on all discretionary spending. But here is my check for another year of non-discretionary boat therapy. Only "Wooden Boat" at the other end of the boat publishing spectrum, and "Boats" stop me dead in my tracks when they turn up in the mail. When they arrive, everything else must wait.

Jonathan Leavy, W. Newton, MA.

#### WHAT MANNER OF MODEL IS THIS?

On a recent stopover in Newburyport, Massachusetts, I used some of my time to visit the Custom House Museum there. In the gift shop I saw a very fine model of what appeared to be a sailing canoe, full scale unknown, but appearing to be about 4' long in model scale.

It was rigged with three masts, each carrying a lateen sail, with a boom on the mizzen only. The sails were quite old appearing cloth and somewhat deteriorated. The black hull was very elegantly shaped, reminiscent of the dugout canoes of Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. It had moderate sheer with a strongly raked curved stem, hollow bow and a slightly raked straight sternpost on which a rudder was hung.

The hull had considerable deadrise with a moderately radiused turn of the bilge, probably at, or just above, the waterline at midships. The rudder was controlled by a yoke and steering lines. What looked like a seat back extended above the gunwales forward of the mizzen mast. As the model was mounted above eye level, I could not determine if it was decked or open.

Fourtin Powell, Rockland, ME.

#### BROAD RANGE APPRECIATED

I found the November 1st issue the most interesting yet. Rowing a Banks dory myself, I could appreciate the efforts of those two trans-Atlantic rowers. The historical perspective this provided was particularly captivating.

The "Brown Fleet" article was also welcome as it broadened my view of the boating world. And the "Barnegat Boat" story reached me particularly because of similar master/apprentice experience I have had in Santa Cruz at Bill Grunwald's Aeolus Boat Shop.

Mike Fitz, Santa Cruz, CA.

#### IT'S BEEN A BETTER YEAR

It sure has been a better year with "Boats" to read and re-read to take my mind off all the rest of the lousy news. I'd like to add my voice to those pleased to see Phil Bolger on your pages. I'd like to see an occasional expanded feature on some of his smaller designs, and maybe a few more "how to" articles. But there I go, wanting to change what is already a great magazine. Keep your focus!

Steve Levesque, Plainville, MA.

# HAPPENINGS

A few events of interest are already scheduled for the next month and here is a short summary of them:

January 20: Long Distance Canoe Trip Planning with Stan Wass, Baer's River Workshop, Exeter, RI. (401) 295-0855.

February 1: Seacoast Indoor Rowing Championships, Portsmouth, NH. (603) 926-1197.

February 4: Maine Island Trail Association Boston Region Meeting, REI Sports, Reading, MA. (617) 944-5103.


February 9. Paddling the Maine Island Trail with Tammy Venn, Baer's River Workshop, Exeter, RI, (401) 295-0855.

February 28: The Great Auk Project with Dick Wheeler, L.L. Bean Public Clinics, Freeport, ME, (800) 341-4341.

March 20-22: Fifth Annual Maine Boatbuilders' Show, Portland, Maine. (207) 774-1067.

We are still preparing a master list of sorts of organizations which will be offering activities you can take part in during 1992 and will publish it as an insert you can remove and file for year-long reference. This will free our pages of repetitive listings of such groups and their events, and our "Happenings" will then focus on the events of the "one-shot" nature, not part of ongoing calendars of activities.

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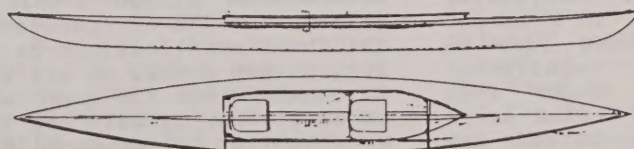
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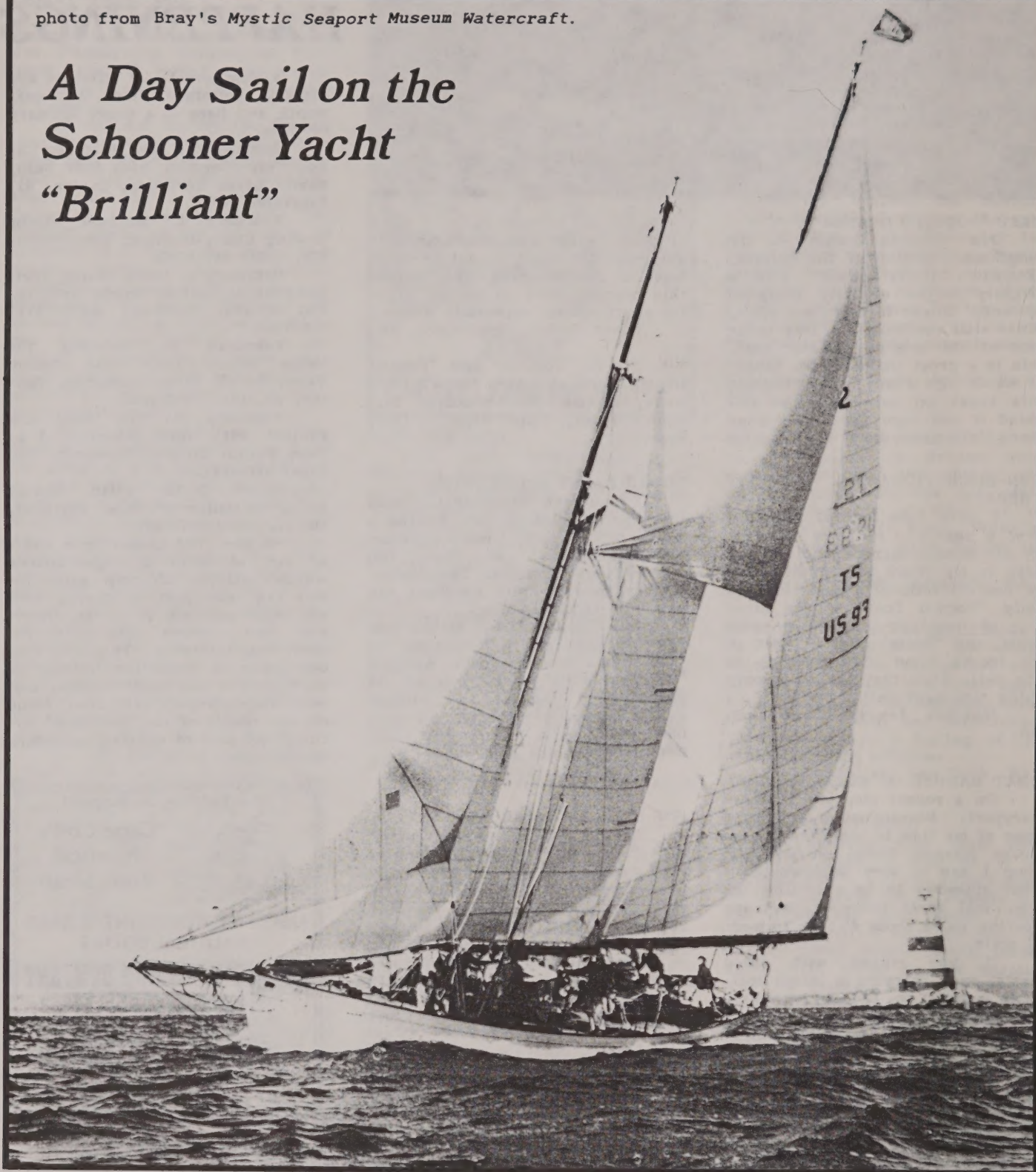
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## *A Day Sail on the Schooner Yacht "Brilliant"*



Years ago as I was tack-  
ing my kit-built daysailer  
outside West Cove in Noank, I  
spotted what seemed like an  
apparition, a magnificent  
racing schooner under full  
sail, gracefully heeled over,  
booming along just outside Ram  
Island and headed toward Ston-  
ington. She must have passed  
within fifty feet of me, as I  
sat there gaping, with *White-  
cap* luffing in the light

breeze. It is one of those  
scenes that etched itself in  
memory, like persistent  
childhood recollections or the  
fragmentary scenes we are able  
to recall from the past when  
so many other details are lost  
or forgotten. I wondered what  
a boat like that was up to in  
Fishers Island Sound that day  
and who the middle-aged crew  
in what I took to be uniforms  
might be. From my naive per-

spective, the elegant schooner  
and her crew clad in bright  
yellow were somehow the real  
thing, big time yachting or  
racing as experienced by the  
very wealthy in days of yore.  
I felt pleased, as someone who  
had come recently and rather  
late to the world of sail-  
boating, to have been in-  
cluded, however peripherally,  
in this scene from the past. I  
remember waving and feeling an



expansive camaraderie when the doughty helmsman waved back.

Over the years I learned enough about boats to realize that the schooner of my apparition was indeed something out of the ordinary--the elegant Olin Stephens-designed yacht *Brilliant*, built for Walter Barnum by the Nevins City Island Boatyard in 1932, and now serving Mystic Seaport Museum as a training ship and sea-going emissary. It was not until this year, however, that I was able to take advantage of the opportunity, open to museum members, to serve as crew aboard the *Brilliant* on an all-day cruise.

On a rainy, blustery Friday late in September I headed for the shore in my Ranger pick-up, trying to curb my enthusiasm, for I have come to believe that the expectation of keen pleasure is a sort of *hubris* that assures disappointment. The forecast was for clearing skies and winds of 15 to 25 knots, much the same, I recalled, as the November day the previous season when I had chartered the *Janet May*, a replica of an 1890s coasting schooner, for a course I was running at Eastern Connecticut State University dealing with New England and the sea. On that occasion the captain, new to the job, was extraordinarily conservative. We ran before the wind with nothing but the staysail raised and never ventured outside New Haven harbor. To make the situation even more exasperating, as we limped back and the captain had at last decided to raise the reefed mainsail, a group of kids with their teacher from the Sound School flew past us in an open, 32' sharpie headed for open water and an overnight stay in the Thimble Islands! The expectation of no more than a repetition of that sort of disappointment, I believed, might insure a glorious day on the *Brilliant*.

Just before 8:00 a.m. I pulled into the South Parking Lot at Mystic Seaport, donned my heavy-weather gear, and headed for Lighthouse Point, regretting that I had left my sea boots behind. Though I was early, I found that half of the crew had already arrived and were gathered under a large tent which had been put up for the Members Days activities to take place over the weekend. Most of the talk beyond introductions was focused on the weather. The captain and the mate arrived, followed by the remainder of the crew,



Coming aboard, the admiral and his wife in the foreground.



Captain George Moffett takes us down the river.

twelve of us in all. Most of the crew were in their forties and fifties, with one couple a bit younger and another, a retired admiral and his wife, somewhat older. The captain, George Moffett, suggested that we have a cup of coffee and plan to catch the 10:15 bridge opening, by which time, he hoped, the rain would have cleared, as predicted.

Most of the crew were aboard for coffee before nine o'clock. Under the guidance of Lynn MacKesson, the mate, they eagerly attacked preliminary tasks, such as removing and stowing sail covers. My first surprise was of the scale of the tackle and gear. I had expected the polished brass,

the lovingly cared-for teak, and dazzling brightwork everywhere with a mirror-like finish, but somehow I did not expect six-foot-long sail ties or jib hanks that filled your palm and weighed upwards of a pound. In fact I felt a bit klutzy handling one inch lines and outsized winches and cleats. Our first task requiring teamwork was reefing the mainsail with the crew stationed at even intervals along the boom to roll up the sail and tie in the reef, again under the cheerful orders and with the helping hand of the mate Lynn. Before we knew it, it was time to start up the diesel, cast off, and head down the channel to the foot



of Mystic River and Fishers Island Sound.

Captain George Moffett proved to be the amiable person he at first appeared to be--and then some. Throughout the day he was a very pleasant raconteur, spinning yarns about his adventures and misadventures aboard the *Brilliant* during the last eight years, many of them at his own expense. He spoke of plans, not yet agreed to by the powers that be at Mystic Seaport, to take the *Brilliant* to the Mediterranean, and perhaps Northern waters as well; with paying guests as crew for the Atlantic crossings, and others for shorter cruises in more protected waters. When asked about Atlantic storms and other perils, he said that in his view the most hazardous duty *Brilliant* was subject to was daysailing in Fishers Island Sound, that innocent-looking collection of rocks, reefs, wrecks, nasty currents, and sudden changes in sky, wind, and sea. In a vessel that draws about ten feet, Moffett said, you are forever finding another uncharted rock to bash into or shoaling bottom to go aground on. As we made our way down the river, he rather casually gave the wheel a shove from time to time and seemed to forget entirely about staying in the channel and avoiding the up-river traffic as soon as Sandra, a crew member who had cruised on the *Brilliant* before and who had established herself as boatswain for the trip, put her hand on the wheel.

On the river we encountered light, northerly airs, so that we were able to raise sail without any fuss as we passed Masons Island under clearing skies. The sails of a schooner are set from aft forward, unless there is some reason to balance the rig quickly. So up went the reefed but still enormous main, then the gaff foresail, and finally the staysail. Captain Moffett, or George as he felt comfortable with, had decided not to hank on the jib just yet because the marine forecast was predicting upwards of 20 knots of wind. My task was to help haul up the foresail; with two of us on the peak halyard and two more on the throat, we hauled away in unison, with Lynn the mate calling out orders that kept the gaff parallel to the deck. As we passed West Cove in Noank, the sun came out and the wind began to blow steady and strong out of

the north. *Brilliant* heeled over in the blow and began to boom along, cutting effortlessly through the whitecaps which had suddenly appeared. I was at the helm and though we were on a starboard tack and had the right of way, I had an uneasy moment when a little daysailer seemed to come out of nowhere and to be headed perilously close to us. I was relieved when the daysailer luffed up and the young man at the helm waved. I waved back cheerfully, and followed a course for Bartletts, as George suggested.

It turned out to be a splendid day for sailing. Under gray-blue skies the sun was warm despite the stiff breeze, and most of the crew shed a sweater or sweatshirt but kept their oilies on just in case. Much of the talk was of classic yachts that had recently been in the area, of children at college and of grandchildren, of boats considerably more modest than the one we were now sailing, and of the past. Oddly, four or five of the crew, including your reporter, had lived in Brooklyn Heights in the '60s and still had friends or family there. The crew came from Philadelphia, Westchester, New York, and a number of locations in New England, and I was surprised that I was the only one, excepting the captain and mate, familiar with the waters of Fishers Island Sound, a circumstance which of course forced me to broadcast my local knowledge on every possible occasion. For all the crew, I felt, this was to be a holiday from reality.

Handling *Brilliant* had its surprises as well. New to me were the electronic instruments indicating wind direction, wind speed, boat speed, and the like. At first I did not know if they were to be believed, with readings upwards of 24 knots of wind and 9.4 knots of boat speed, but I gradually abandoned my skepticism. To the skipper of a *Nimble 20*, *Brilliant* even when heeled over felt as solid and sturdy as an aircraft carrier. As we passed Niantic, Captain George gave the order to come about, a maneuver that turned out to be as simple as it would have been on a daysailer, since without the jib, all our sails were self-tending. All that was required was to give the wheel a good turn, about twice around, and to let go the starboard backstay and trim the port. Once about, as the wind had come around to-

ward the east, we headed for the *Dumplings* on a close reach, the crew sheeted in all sails, and I asked the admiral if he would like to take a turn at the helm. Standing at the wheel the admiral, a man of modest size with a weather-beaten countenance, in his heavy weather gear, boots, and crushed seaman's cap, looked to me more like the skipper of a Gloucester schooner than a retired senior officer of the United States Navy.

Captain George, who had put his hand on the wheel from time to time, said he was not happy with its balance. Apparently, he felt that the wheel of a schooner upwards of 60' on deck should be turned with one finger and then stay put. He explained that we could either tie in the mainsail's second reef or hank on the jib to balance the rig properly. His decision to break out the jib pleased all hands, who were game for more rather than less sail. It was not till later in the day, when we had it spread out on the deck for folding and stowage, that I realized how huge a sail this jib was. As we beat to windward able to point a bit more with the big jib set, we spotted the sails of the *Mystic Clipper*, a restored coastal schooner which takes people on day trips out of Mystic, headed towards us on a broad reach. Realizing that we would pass close to each other inside the *Dumplings*, George went below and emerged with a brass cannon, the sort used to fire blank shotgun shells at flag-raising ceremonies.

The two schooners as they approached were quite a contrast, the *Mystic Clipper*, sturdy, stately, moving leisurely before the wind with its huge ensign waving majestically; the *Brilliant*, slender, elegant, gleaming with polished brass and brightwork, pennants fluttering, heeled over in the blow, with a bone in her teeth, making what seemed to be twice the speed of her more burdensome companion. As the schooners passed port to port within fifty feet of each other, George fired the brass cannon and shouted, "Prepare to board." There was much cheering and waving from both ships, as the gimlet-eyed admiral steered us even a bit closer. It was a moment to remember.

After passing the nun that marks the shoal off Flat Hammock, we tacked again in order to fetch up toward New



London. George told the helmsman to cut it close to the buoy since there was thin water to starboard, an indication of the difference between a boat that draws ten feet and my Nimble, for to me there was all the water in the world to starboard. Off Seaflower Reef we jibed and headed east on an easy reach for Stonington. Aboard my little canoe yawl, jibing in twenty knots is a dicey affair, one approached with trepidation and avoided if possible; aboard the *Brilliant* a passenger engaged in conversation might not have even noticed that we had changed course!

By this time the crew had sorted itself out into tasks and two basic stations. Forward, with the mate, were the younger, more physical of us, who tended to the sails, particularly the big jib; in and about the cockpit, with the captain, were the older salts and story tellers. Among the latter, I found a comfortable nook alongside the port backstay, which I tended as required. On the reach to Stonington the crew went below from time to time for lunch--a refreshing spread of salads, pita bread, and a variety of goodies to stuff it with. After leaving Latimer light astern, we headed for Stonington harbor, up which we sailed right into the eye of the wind, tacking seven times in as many minutes, and giving the crew handling the jib quite a workout. Abeam of Dodson's Boatyard Captain George took the helm for a moment and moved *Brilliant* gracefully through the sweetest of jibes. He then gave the wheel to the admiral's wife, a cheerful, diminutive helmsman, who cut close to the west breakwater and took us back to Mystic inside White Rock.

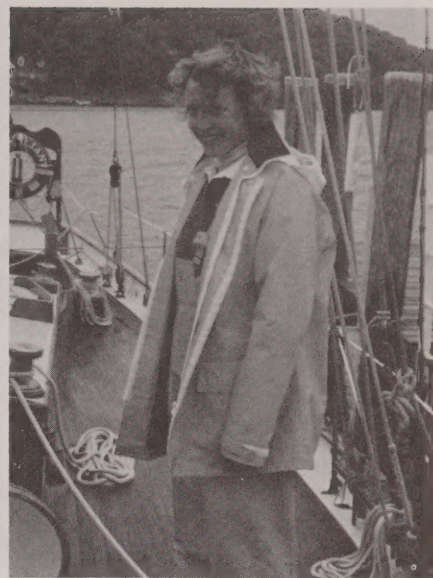
We were not yet done with memorable moments, however. Making our way down the channel inside Ram Island to Morgan Point and planning to turn up river there by old number 5, we suddenly went aground inside can 11, hitting fairly hard, crunching, scraping for several seconds, hitting another rock, and then slipping off into safe water. Captain George reassured the crew that the lead keel was made to absorb such shocks but the mate had looked as if someone were drawing a knife through her flesh. As the chart showed two fathoms inside the buoy, we had to conclude it was off station and that the captain's earlier

observations about the perils of Fisher's Island Sound daysailing were not exaggerations.

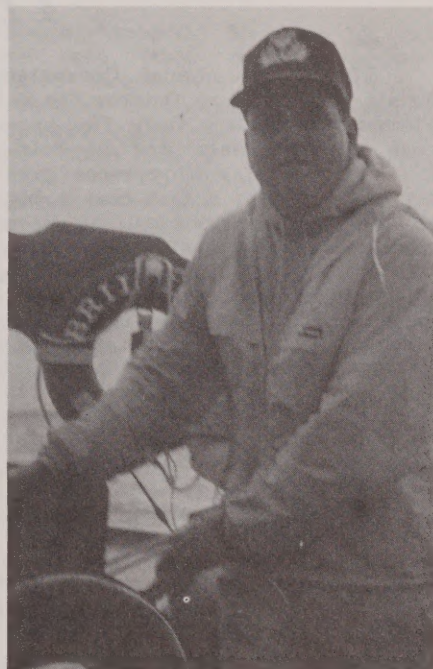
We lowered sails with our bow pointed toward Noank Shipyard and then motored up the river. I had always wondered how the enormous sails on yachts could be rolled up so neatly on their booms when my handkerchief of a main is always a mess of folds and bulges. What you do, as Lynn showed us, is to line up the crew along the boom on the side opposite the fall of the sail, have them form an arm-length pocket of the sail on their side, and then, working together, fill the pocket by repeatedly grasping the sail at the top of the boom and stuffing it. There would be the task of docking, of feeling like a klutz again faced with the problem of throwing an armful of one-inch line about twelve feet, of shammying the brightwork, and squeegeeing the teak decks in the company of crew who had the time and inclination to stay, and to have one for the road when Captain George broke out the Chevas. There were to be some exchanges of addresses as well, before we went ashore, the crew wanting to feel perhaps the sort of camaraderie engendered during an Atlantic crossing rather than the brief, fragmentary, and somehow insubstantial experience of sailing a lavish yacht out of the past for part of a day.

In addition to the rocks in the channel by can number 11, we experienced one more memorable event before the day was done, a considerably more pleasant jolt of reality. Just before we made our mooring at Lighthouse Point, George hailed a lovingly cared-for catspaw dinghy, with an elegant spritsail rig and a dapper streamer, ghosting along about fifty feet off our quarter. "Nice boat," he shouted. "Build her yourself?" The old gentleman at the tiller and his wife seated on a thwart both nodded yes and smiled. The doughty captain of the *Brilliant* had made their day. It occurred to me that as I had been the young man in a daysailer luffing up to admire the glamorous schooner yacht booming along, so might I become some fifteen or so years down the line, given sufficient time, luck, and patience, the old gentleman sailing his lovely catspaw dinghy.

by Jim Lacey

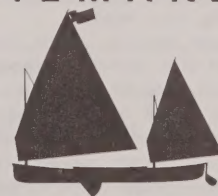


Lynn MacKesson, mate.



Your reporter at the helm

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## The Oarmaster Trials

The second annual Oarmaster Trials were held on October 6th on Pleasant Bay, Cape Cod. The purpose of the trials was two-fold. Most traditional rowing races give the entrant with a fast boat a big advantage, perhaps resulting in a win for the best boat, rather than the best rower. The first purpose of the Oarmaster Trials was to compare rowers based on skills and strength, with no particular advantage gained by entering a fast boat. The second purpose was to compare various boat types based on their design, with no particular advantage gained from being entered by a strong, skillful rower.

Removal of the fast boat or fast rower effect was achieved by having each boat raced in a short race by each rower. Thus at the end of the round robin, all rowers had raced the same set of boats and all boats had been rowed by the same set of rowers. The total time for each rower in the round robin was summed and the lowest aggregate time won. The total time for each boat was similarly summed and the total times gave a fair comparison among the boats.

These trials were established last year for oar-on-gunwale, fixed seat craft rowed singly and were run this year on the same basis. This year there were fourteen entrants, up from seven last year, and so the races were organized into two fleets of seven boats and owners each. By and large entrants represented the most popular traditional New England rowboat designs, the dory, Whitehall, wherry, peapod, etc. This year we were able to also attract two more modern designs.

The Trials were held on Cape Cod on northern Pleasant Bay. Tony Davis of Arey's Pond Boat Yard very kindly allowed the Vik-

ings Rowing Club to use his yard for scrutineering, launching and haul out, a beautiful setting at a convenient location. Helping out the Club's race committee in the committee boat was Holly David from Mystic Seaport Museum. Many others, Viking members and non-members alike, helped with the scrutineering, launching and beach rotation of the boats during the sets of races.

The course was set between two marks about a half-mile apart, one just off Namequoit Point on the mainland in Orleans, and the other at the northern end of Sampson's Island. Except for a slight counter-clockwise rotation, this was the same course used for last year's Trials. We had hoped that the weather and the course would provide conditions suitable for observing the boats in enough wind and sea to test their tracking and controllability without being severe enough to make the crankier boats unmanageable.

The day was forecast with an 80% chance of rain across southeastern Massachusetts, and in fact most locations had moderate rain, but the gods of rowing decreed that Pleasant Bay would have no rain. It was forecast to blow 15-25 knots from the SE, a bit much for our purposes, but the wind started off at about 10 knots from the SE at 10 a.m., veering slightly to SSE and rising to about 15 knots by the last race at 1:30 p.m., a very good wind for our purposes. The course, especially the eastern half, was sheltered by islands about a half-mile to windward, and the water was shallow, averaging 10'. Waves reached whitecap size (8"-12" crest to trough) at the more exposed western end of the course, with no whitecaps at the eastern, more sheltered, end.

The course was laid in a SW-NE direction, set to have a beam wind, but the SE wind gradually veered to SSE putting it just aft of the beam on the outward leg and just forward of the beam on the return leg. A flooding current in the same direction as the wind, affected the western end of the course. It built during the first few races to perhaps one knot and then died off to near slack by the last. These conditions proved moderately challenging to all participants and thus were ideal for the Trial's purposes. While exact measurement and comparisons become much more difficult than in flat water, the factors that really determine rowing speed in any conditions but a calm were made dramatically obvious by the wind, seas, and current.

Fourteen boats were entered. Their vital statistics are given in the table. Each rower was asked to submit comments after the races about the various boats he rowed. A summary of the results and attendant comments follows:

Places 1-3: Virtually tied for first were the two identical gunning dories, and the peapod. Built in fiberglass by Roger Crawford in Humarock, Massachusetts, the gunning dories finished 1st and 3rd this year. In fact, the heavier of these two boats was both the fastest in these Trials and the fastest in last year's Trials. Together the gunning dories had two 1sts, four 2nds and a 3rd in their fourteen races. Comments on these boats included: "Well behaved." "I don't remember much about it and that's good!" "Superb, but a bit wet." "As an all-purpose boat it's unbeatable." "The only boat really manageable downwind."

The other boat that did particularly well, with the second best



total time, was the fiberglass peapod, which took two 1sts and a 2nd in its seven races. All three boats were within a few seconds of each other on average, and they share a common design; all are double-ended and have rounded blunt ends with very little vertical surface for wind or sea to get a hold of. Consequently they were easy to manage in the 10-15 knot winds of this year's Trials, enabling the rower to put his effort into speed rather than control. Comments on the peapod included: "Much faster than I thought I could make it go." "A wild ride, very bouncy, I got soaked." "Pounded badly."

Places 4-6: Virtually tied for 4th place were the Herreshoff tender, the Gull dory, and the Piscataqua River wherry. It is simply incredible that a 12' lapstrake yacht tender with bow sections similar to those of a ping-pong ball, should be competitive with 15' and 16' boats designed for speed. The only explanation is again that ease of controlling the tender permitted its rowers to concentrate all their energies on getting across the finish line, rather than staying on the course. Comments included: "Not bad for a short boat." "Almost surfed downwind."

The greyhound from the Piscataqua required more effort to keep her trimmed and on course. Although she was obviously fast and managed to win two of the seven races, her times were very erratic. Comments included: "Tippy and very skittish." "Has lots of windage." "Difficult to control in quartering winds." "Sluggish off the line, but once moving was hardly slowed by wind or wave."

The Gull was well liked: "Comfortable, well-behaved." "Well-behaved, maneuverable." "Went especially well into the wind." "Pounded when going to windward."

Places 7-10: Virtually tied for 7th place were the "Green Machine", the "Artemis" and "Skua", and the Mayer/Thayer Whitehall. The "Green Machine", a carvel planked pulling boat designed by John Gardner on inspiration from L. Francis Herreshoff, was provided by the Mystic Seaport. At 16'10", the longest boat in the Trials, it looked very fast but finished consistently in the middle of the pack and suffered from control problems. Comments included: "Badly trimmed, out of control all the time." "Could have been set up for balance, but wasn't." "She needs some ballast, and a small skeg running the length of the boat would help greatly." "Oars were nice; long, heavy, but perfectly balanced, feathered very easily with plastic leathers, buttons too small so oars go through oarlocks." "Fast but unbalanced. My second best time, all done with one oar."

Beautifully made in Pittsburgh by Andre deBartalaben, "Artemis" and "Skua" were trailered to Cape Cod just in time for the Trials. Strip-built and edge glued, they were striking to look at and at 80-90 pounds, extremely light, with very fine deep stems and almost vertical wineglass transoms. Comments included: "Nicely oared, cleverly designed, well-built, crisp and clean workmanship, beautiful!" Rowers who had the privilege of trying them found that they rowed beautifully either in the lee of the land or directly into the wind. Al-



Pre-race meeting was run by organizer David Stookey.

though "Artemis" finished 1st in one race, both boats generally posted major control problems "reaching or running". One rower reported using only one oar with two hands for a while to keep "Skua" on track. Another had to backwater to stay on the course. Others termed these boats, "too light" and "in desperate need of ballast." It would have been interesting to have had more time with these boats in heavy weather to see whether playing with trim could make them more controllable.

Tim Mayer's Whitehall, beautifully finished from a Thayer fiberglass hull, was the only boat to have outriggers, bronze folding hardware that placed the oarlocks about 3" outside the gunwales.

## MEASUREMENTS

##	Type	Owner	Designer, Builder	LOA	LWL	Beam	Weight	Dor	
								length	Comments
6	New York Whiteha	Mayer	Thayer glass hull finished by Mayer	14'3.5"	12'11"	55"	158	8'	Three-inch oarlock outriggers.
9	Gunning Dory	Wall	Built by Crawford Boats	14'11"	12'3"	44"	151	7'	
7	Gunning Dory	Crawford	Built by Crawford Boats	14'11"	12'4"	41.5"	165	7'	
1	Artemis	deBartalaben	Built by Middle Path Boats	16'	15'6"	42"	95	7'6"	
3	Skua	deBartalaben	Built by Middle Path Boats	16'	15'6"	38"	85	7'6"	
14	Herreshoff tende	Secor		11'11"	10'7"	47"	167	8'	
20	Herreshoff tende	Rice	Built by Phil Rice	11'6"	10'6"	46"	129	6'6"	Ultralight construction
10	Banks dory	Orbe	Built by Lowell's Boat Shop	15'3"	12'	51.5"	390	8'2"	
4	Piscataqua Wherr	Aborn	Built by Strawberry Banke boat shop	16'8"	14'2"	51"	240	8'	
5	Green Machine	Mystic	Built at Mystic Seaport from Gardner	16'11"	16'	46.5"	186	8'2"	
8	Rangley Lakes	Mystic	Ditto, from plans taken off museum b	14'8"	14'6"	37.5"	154	8'6"	
2	Gull	Bernie Smith	Bolger design, built by Mignone	15'2"	12'	48.5"	152	8'	
19	Whitehall	Donahue	Built by Washington Cty. (ME) Vocati	14'11"	14'	44.5"	331	8'	
11	Peapod	Kirkpatrick	John Lindsey design	14'2"	13'3"	42"	158	7'10"	

LWL: with rower on board BEAM: oarlock base to oarlock base WEIGHT: not reliable, bathroom scales subject to error from positioning





On the dock from left are a Rangeley guideboat, Herreshoff rowing boat, Piscataqua wherry and Herreshoff dinghy.

Comments included: "Beautiful boat." "Needs longer oars or do without the outriggers." "The seat is too high, causing a loss of control." "In a chop probably better without the outriggers and long oars." "Seakindly."

Bringing up the rear: The last four boats were a second Herreshoff tender (11), a carvel Whitehall (12), a Rangeley Lake boat (13) and a Banks dory (DNF). It seems surprising that this Herreshoff tender finished near the bottom of the fleet only because her sistership managed to do surprisingly well. A close look at the measurements may explain the difference between these two boats. The faster tender was shorter, narrower, much lighter and had much

Weighing in the 300+ pound Whitehall.



shorter oars. Why this combination of dimensions should result in greater speed is not clear and would make another interesting study.

The Rangeley Lake boat, built at Mystic Seaport for their livery fleet and modelled after an original boat in their collection, was burdened with an enormous set of oars that were variously described as "unbalanced," "huge," "way too long," and "a mistake." But the boat itself, very light and narrow, was thought by one rower to have "tremendous promise." "I could make it fly when I had a chance to get in four or five good strokes together." "Would row great with decent oars." Others thought it was too narrow and "hard to turn." It would be good to have another crack at the Rangeley Lake design next year with a different pair of oars.

One would expect that the 390 pound Banks dory and the 330 pound Whitehall would be slow and hard to manage in the strong winds and this proved to be true. In fact, the Banks dory, with its great weight, high sides and rapid lee-way, was consistently so far behind that it was withdrawn from the competition by the committee after the third race. Comments on the Whitehall, which was a very handsome carvel planked boat, included: "Tracked beautifully but very slow." "Hard to turn." "At the start I thought I was aground."

On the Banks dory comments were not so kind: "Cramped my left arm so badly that I was afraid the oar was going to slip out of my hand." "It could have been handled if the owner would buy some spruce oars and burn those other things in the fireplace." "Telephone poles for oars soaked up about five pounds of

water each." It's very possible that both boats would have performed very well if crewed by two rowers. This would have supplied the oar power to turn their inertia into momentum and the weight balance to reduce their control problems.

One rower summed up the results by saying, "It seemed as if all the long fast boats had trouble." And that was probably the main lesson of the Trials this year: Speed in windy conditions, and ultimately seaworthiness too, depend more on a boat's balance and seakindliness than on her length and sleekness. In fact, many properties that make for a fast flat water boat, length of waterline, fineness of entry and exit, narrow beam, contribute to control problems in a seaway. In this year's conditions, there seemed to be virtually no correlation between speed and either weight or waterline length, as shown in the scatter charts with this report.

This year's fastest boats were those with seakindly lines and this year's fastest rowers were those who knew how to balance and control a wide range of hull shapes. One rower/designer/builder summed up the importance of a rower's knowledge of turning and handling: "The performance of many of these boats, especially the longer, lighter ones, could have benefitted greatly from some race tuning. After such tuning, there is not a boat in the group that I'd be afraid to take offshore. Ultimately, cruising and fixed seat ocean racing can come to be dominated by lightweight, sophisticated hulls of moderately long waterline length. In time, rowers will learn how to extract their potential on all points and in all conditions."

Results within the two fleets of rowers were as follows:

#### FLEET 1

1. Steve Woll	5:51
2. Russ Smith	6:12
3. Bobby Power	6:21
4. Tony Davis/Phil Rice	7:11
5. Rob Wadleigh	7:33
6. Carl Kirkpatrick	7:45
7. Andre deBartalaben	7:57
Average	6:59

#### FLEET 2

1. Jon Aborn	5:41
2. Mike Orbe	5:50
3. Pat Cassidy	6:29
4. Barry Donahue	7:44
5. Dan Secor	8:07
6. Tim Mayer	8:20
7. Bernie Smith	9:25
Average	7:22

The winners of each fleet were then compared on the basis of their performance in the gunning dories. Steve Woll's time was 5:50 and Jon Aborn's 5:55. Thus the winner of this year's Oarmaster Trophy, by



the narrowest of margins, was Steve Woll. The Trophy was presented after the racing at the home of Barry Donahue in Brewster, where all the competitors and their spectator friends were invited for Barry's renowned chili, enchiladas, and an exchange of boat stories.

Some caveats regarding the data: It should be understood that there are several important factors that contrive to make the data we collected less reliable than we had hoped. Some are generally true for a race of this type. Others pertain to the conditions of this 1991 Trials in particular.

Retiring the Banks dory in the middle of the competition probably hurt those who had rowed it, and rested those who did not have to. Some other boats were much more tiring than average, perhaps affecting the performance of rowers in their following races.

The two boats that arrived late, "Artemis" and "Skua", did not get a round robin of rowers, thus skewing the data for them and also for the boats which were rowed by their designated rowers in their stead during the second race.

As Tony Davis and Phil Rice took turns rowing the boats assigned to Tony, times could be somewhat skewed if Tony and Phil were not equal performers.

There were occasional traffic jams at the start line, where the upwind, uptide end was popular. These may have resulted in up to twenty seconds lost for some competitors in some races.

The race committee's original intent was to have not only the gunning dories, which were known to be nearly identical, but also the Herreshoff yacht tenders, and the "Artemis" and "Skua" in separate fleets, in the hope that these would give added indications of which fleet winner was the overall winner. As it happened, the tenders proved to be very different from one another in performance, and the "Artemis" and "Skua" arrived late. However, relying solely on the gunning dories as the means of comparing the fleet winners' times could have caused bias; different wind and sea conditions, different states of tiredness, and different race traffic conditions could easily affect the outcome that was eventually decided by only five seconds.

There was one other factor, probably the biggest of them all, that makes the times for the fourteen boats, if not the fourteen rowers, less comparable than we might think. This factor is the ability of the rowers to adapt instantly to different gear, different hull behavior, and different conditions. Each rower had to cope with oars that they considered too long or too short, leathers or oarlocks that didn't fit, in one case an oarlock that kept collapsing, seats that

were too low or too high, fore-and-aft trim that made a boat tend to broach or crab, stretchers that were at the wrong distance or non-existent, and so on. If all these factors could be removed, we might improve our ideas of which boats are really the fastest, most seaworthy and best behaved. But at the same time, it is exactly these factors that test the rower's experience and boatmanship rather than just his strength.

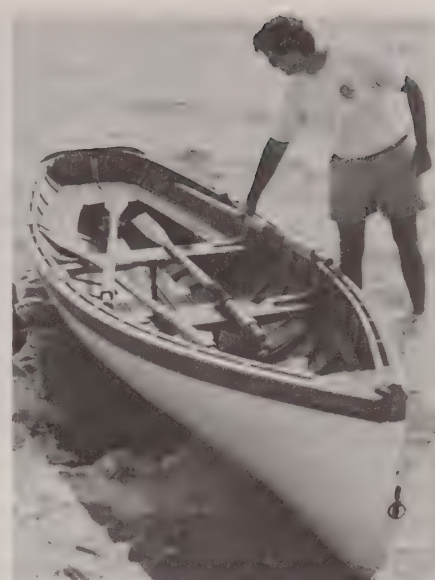
This year's Trials were a particularly good test of these qualities. Skills that paid off included:

Estimating each boat's leeway. Some very curved courses were rowed, especially in the earlier races before everyone had worked out the headings,

Figuring out how to get each boat to remain directionally stable enough to row for speed rather than for control. At least two competitors carried their own moveable ballast, and several moved their rowing positions within the boats.

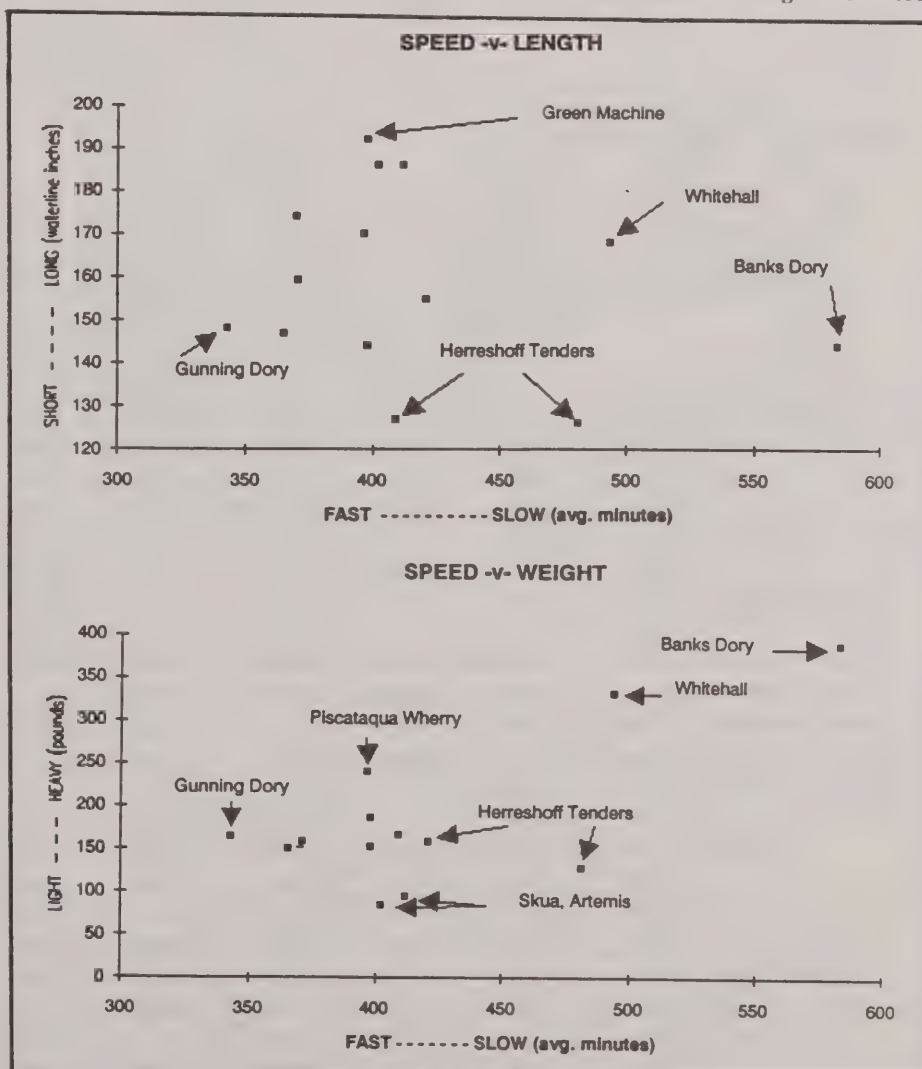
Adapting their rowing styles to the variations in seat heights, stretcher distances, etc.

Coping with different oar handle sizes (1-1/4" to 3" in diameter), oar lengths (6-1/2' to 8-1/2'),



After the race was over, Barry Donahue checks out his "Mary B. II" for wear and tear. There was none.

weight (spruce to what felt like oak), and blade shape (short and flat to long and spooned). Post-race comments indicated that more time was lost to cumbersome oars, oarlocks too tight or too







Part of the fleet heads for the race course out on Little Pleasant Bay.

loose, oars too short or too long, buttons that slid through oarlocks, leathers that caught on oarlocks, and in at least one case, oars that catapulted the rower into the bows when a stroke was missed, than any other difficulty presented by hull, wind or sea. One competitor's comment about oars: "If I am buying a fast pair of skies, I should make sure I have a comfortable pair of boots first. That's where the gear connects to my body."

Coping with minor breakdowns. During one race the gunning dory's seat collapsed and the Mayer Whitehall's outrigger oarlock wouldn't lock into place.

Figuring out which stroke worked best. Some boats seemed to respond to long pulls, others to quicker, choppy strokes. The two fastest rowers, Steve Woll and Jon Aborn, were noticed using the shortest strokes, but whether this contributed directly to speed, or to speed through increased control, was not obvious.

All in all, the challenge to do well in seven different rowing boats in rough conditions was met well by all competitors, and the Oarmaster Trials proved a good test of whether a rower "can swing an oar in any boat". Comments on the race as a whole were uniformly en-

thusiastic, ranging from "People love it," through "Hugely successful," to "Everyone said it was the funniest thing they ever did," (from a first-time participant). "The Vikings are the most unusual bunch of rowers I've ever met. From this brief exposure I'd trade all of our local rowing clubs for one like this."

I guess we'll do it again next year, and we are reviewing a number of suggestions for improving it.

David Stookey, 125 Standish St., Duxbury, MA 02332.

Photos by Walter Baron.

#### OARMASTER TRIALS – October 6, 1991

BOAT	RACE NUMBER							Avg w	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOT	AVG
Artemis			0:08:16 13 Davis	0:05:50 1 R. Smith	0:06:10 7 Power	0:07:13 6 Waddleigh	0:08:15 12 Kirkpatrick	0:35:44	0:07:09 7
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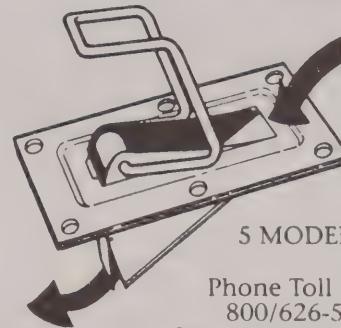
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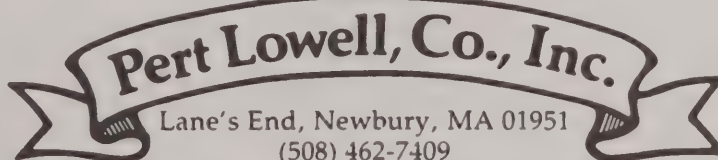
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## Season's End at Oyster Harbors...

We met early at the town landing at Osterville's Bridge Street on a cold, cloudy, but calm, morning the day after Cape Cod's first real dusting of snow. Not a big crowd, only three boats from the Cape Cod Vikings Club, but as Pete Culler said, "you don't need a big crowd for an expedition like this one." Ice was in all our bilges, but Jon Aborn's wherry took the cake by having to have the snow shoveled out with the bailer.

We pushed off and rowed under the drawbridge near the Crosby boatyards toward the back side of Oyster Harbors. The water was flat

calm with no wind, and mirrored a small fleet of Wianno Seniors moored for the winter without their masts. A few quohoggers worked the shoreline as oysterman Dick Nelson waved good morning from his workboat. Surprisingly, nobody else was out on the water. We pulled on around Oyster Harbors with the wind now picking up as we passed Cotuit.

We landed on Dead Neck for coffee and donuts provided by Viking president Bernie Smith, and took a peek over the dunes to see if a passage along the outside of the Neck to the channel at West

Bay was workable. It didn't look too bad, so the Whitehall I rowed with Doug Bergin, the Aborn wherry, and Bernie Smith's Gloucester Gull headed out into Nantucket Sound. The wind was now blowing 15-20 knots from the SE, kicking up uneven 2'-4' seas. The weight of the two of us in the Whitehall helped us to make fairly easy way further offshore, while the wherry and the Gull struggled on in the beam seas a bit closer in to the breakers on the Neck.

Our plan for the Whitehall was to head out a ways and then row with the wind at our stern into West Bay. Doug and I surfed the Whitehall into the Bay and then waited in the lee for first Jon, and then Bernie. All three boats had some water slopped into them and we were all a bit wet, but not so much as to be uncomfortable as we carried the boats up to the trailers. Not a bad six-mile rowing adventure on a December Saturday morning.

Some thoughts then at the town landing:

Were we prepared for the conditions? Yes, we all had PFD's and layered clothing, but nobody wore a dry suit or immersion gear.

Should small boats have been out there? Yes, the boats all performed well. The Whitehall's extra weight, deep skeg and two rowers put it in its element. The wherry seemed to pull well, but the Gull pounded into the chop and had the hardest time of it in the rough water outside.

Had we considered the worst case scenario? Yes, we had all thought about how we would deal with a capsized boat. Safety was first in our minds and we felt confident of our boat's abilities in the funky conditions we encountered.

Barry Donahue, Brewster, Massachusetts.



Barry Donahue's Whitehall on the beach and Bernie Smith underway in his Gloucester Gull dory.







## ...and on the Sudbury River

We met midday on Sherman Bridge Road at the closed bridge over the Sudbury River under possibly threatening skies on a warm first Saturday in December. Not a big crowd, but bigger than Pete Culler had in mind when he said, "you don't need a big crowd for an expedition like this one." About a dozen boats, several sea kayaks, several pulling boats and a canoe. It was the Cape Ann Rowing Club's last outing for 1991, organized by Chuck Mainville on his local favorite river. We would cruise about three miles downstream through the National Wildlife Refuge and gather for a picnic on an island in Fairhaven Bay where the river opens out into what appears to be a lake.

As we headed downstream under paddle and oar, the sun came out and it became Indian Summer, warm and pleasant with just about no wind. There was little other boat traffic despite the unusually mild day, a few canoes whose occupants were surprised at the sudden appearance of our fleet around a bend in the midst of the quiet marsh lined shores, and one small olive drab painted aluminum fishing skiff under tiny outboard power that kayaker Bob Porter identified as a "Sudbury River Cigarette Boat".

The leisurely island picnic was the social occasion with individual lunches supplemented by potluck dishes for all to sample. This pause also gave opportunity for some tryouts of various boats, and the Mainville sliding seat double wherry was a favorite. The lowering sun too soon reminded us that this was December, after all, and the gathering slowly disbanded and returned to the boats and the river.

Not a bad six-mile rowing and paddling adventure on a December Saturday afternoon.

Bob Hicks

Trying out the Mainville sliding seat double.



Kayaks headed downstream with dory in left background.



Dick and Pat de la Chapelle enjoying their aluminum canoe.

Frank Durham pauses in his Chamberlain dory to communicate with a mountain biker and horseback rider on the shore; three nice ways to enjoy a mild early winter Saturday outdoors.





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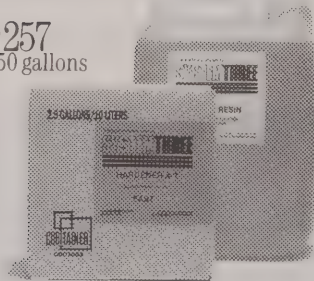
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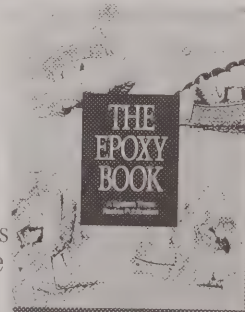
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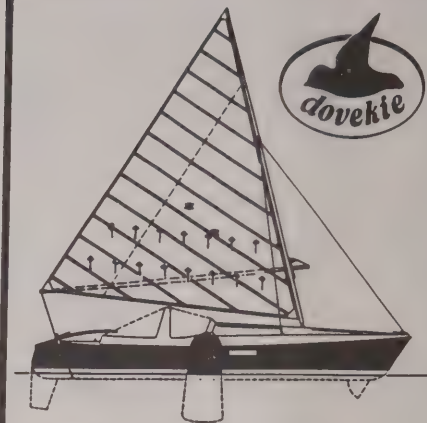
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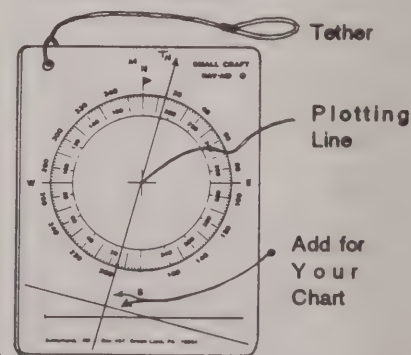
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## Paddling to End Hunger

The forecast for Saturday, October 26th, was not kayak-friendly, the fog that had persisted along the Maine coast for the past several days would continue, and the wind would pick up from the southwest at 10-20 knots. Hardly an ideal day in which to circumnavigate Mt. Desert Island. But this is exactly what David Stebbins of Seal Harbor had in mind for himself and a group of volunteers.

In an effort to raise funds for the "Maine Ending Hunger Now" campaign, which is one of the Camden-based "Hand-to-Hand" projects, David had organized a second annual "Hunger Paddle", in which the 46 miles of Mt. Desert's rugged coastline would be paddled in a kind of continuous relay. The plan was for several teams of kayakers to paddle more or less equal sections simultaneously, but the weather and individual schedules resulted in a venture less structured, but no less interesting or successful.

The first kayaks into the water on Saturday morning were Barry Buchanan's and my Caribous, designed and built by Barry just a few hundred yards from our put-in at Bass Harbor. At 0645 we carried our boats from his house to the water through the foggy gloom, with no hint of the sun present.

Soon we were paddling fast through ocean swells, past Bass Harbor Head and Ship Harbor, hugging the coast, visibility down to 100 yards. Compass bearings took us from bell to buoy through Western Way, around Great Cranberry and Sutton Islands, and back to the south-facing Otter Cliffs of Mt. Desert.

Loons, eiders, oldsquaw and guillemots made brief appearances in the fog, as did a pair of swooping gannets. We pushed on through beam seas, a rising wind, and, from the invisible shore, the eerie thud of hunter's guns. Finally we turned into Frenchman Bay, where not only were we propelled toward Bar Harbor by the wind at our backs and a favorable tide, but also were now treated to welcome glimpses of sunlight on the granite slabs of Champlain Mountain.

We reached Bar Harbor at 1130, 18 miles from our put-in. I suggested stopping for breakfast, then continuing on to the Trenton Bridge, 11 miles away. But Barry had primed himself for a non-stop circumnavigation, fog or no fog, so off he went, north around Bar Island, while I began telephoning for a lift home.

Meanwhile John Carter of Ellsworth and Norm Hawes of Seal Harbor had started from Bar Harbor at 1000, reaching the Trenton Bridge

by 1230. They paddled for the most part through flat water under over-cast skies (no fog), sighting hundreds of rafting sea ducks. Near a point of land they came uncomfortably close to some hunters and their decoys, the hunters were not amused.

By 1430 I had gotten a ride back to Bass Harbor, where I found David Stebbins, Jerri Finch of Belfast, and Steve Hamblen of Bar Harbor, about to set out on the final section of the day. I had left a mild and sunny Bar Harbor, but here on the southern part of the island, the fog had persisted, as often happens. We wondered how Barry was doing, by now he had probably rounded the northern part of Mt. Desert and was headed back into the mist and 15 knot SE wind. David, Jeri and Steve headed out of Bass Harbor, turned northwest into the fog bank and with the following wind and seas made for Bartlett's Landing some 11 miles away.

Well, the circle was not completely closed this day. Barry's heroic effort came to an end at Bartlett's Landing. He had paddled 36 miles without leaving his kayak, with no water to drink after Bar Harbor, and only a few cookies for food. His legs started cramping eventually, but his narrow boat's surprising stability allowed him to dangle one or both legs over the cockpit coaming as he paddled on. At one point his compass seemed to malfunction and he paddled an extra mile or so in a large circle before he discovered the problem. Only when he recognized an island he had already passed did he avoid an unwanted trip to Ellsworth. At last as darkness was closing in, he decided his paddling was over for the day.

About this time, David and his two companions, paddling in thick fog and considerable wind, had become disoriented at one point in Seal Cove, but still made it to the tidal bar connecting Moose Island and Mt. Desert. Gathering darkness convinced them also that it was time to stop, still four miles short of Bartlett's Landing and the completion of the symbolic circumnavigation of Mt. Desert Island on behalf of a worthy cause.

The effort did raise several hundred dollars for the "Ending Hunger Now" campaign. David is now thinking of running next year's event in June when longer daylight hours and possibly better weather might entice more paddlers to take part in a successful attempt to complete the circumnavigation.

Forrest Dillon, W. Tremont, ME.

(Barry Buchanan can be contacted about his Caribou kayaks at P.O. Box 362, Bass Harbor, ME 04653-0362.

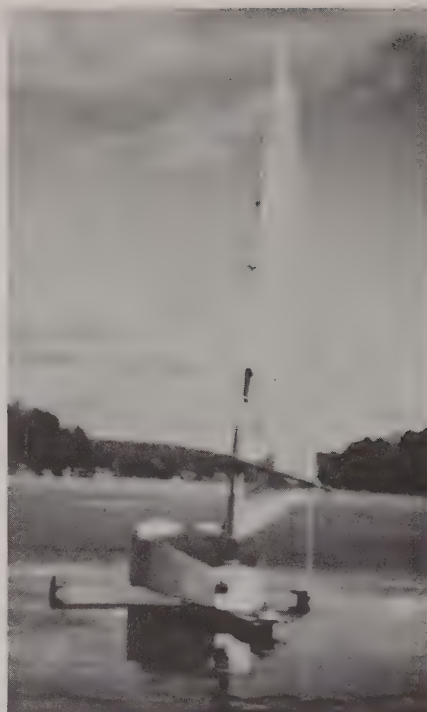


When you have limited funds to invest in a boat building project, but still have the irrepres-sible urge to create something, there are not many designs which will give you the satisfying return that iceboating will. I'm not refer-ring to the slick world of polished DN racing or sailing the family heirloom South Bay Scooter. I mean the type of iceboating made pos-sible with bits and pieces from clean-up week, and from your local hardware store. Boats made from scraps of wood and old steel sign-posts for runners, antenna cable stays and buck-ninety-eight a box galvanized ring nails. With ingen-uity and a couple of weekends in your garage you can whip together a craft capable of darting around the local lake at forty miles an hour or more.

Two winters ago the lure of "seat-of-the-pants" iceboat engin-eering struck my circle of friends in a big way. In September I chal-lenged Ray Fanning, a steamfitter by trade, to an iceboat race. I fig-ured this would give us plenty of time to throw together a couple of boats before the ice froze. What I didn't figure on was the contagious aspect of this undertaking. By Jan-uary there was a fleet of six rag-tag iceboats cruising around.

Ray took the steel approach. He welded a tee-shaped boat out of box member steel, suspending the three runners on little coil springs and adding pedal/rod steering. The sailing rig from his dinghy powers it. It is a little tippy, but very fast, and by leaning out on a corn-er, Ray can carve quite a turn.

Steve Jorgensen, an actor, put together a diminutive wooden craft he dubbed the "Viking Prince". It is a triangular boat of great agili-ty and speed. After watching his graceful circles and figure "8's",



## Project "Icester"

you'll be wondering if there is a motor hidden somewhere.

Monte Wright assembled a Rube Goldberg contraption of plumbing, old rider mower parts, rowing ma-chine pedals, swivel chair guts in his steering, and sections of bed rails for runners. Watching it op-erate is as much fun as riding in it and much less scary.

John Curry built an almond shaped boat with a sprit rig and lots of charm. It has chain/tiller

steering and all-wooden cleats. John also built a DN 60 which Stradivari would be proud of, but he prefers tooling around in this one-off work of art. It's very dif-ferent when you've designed it yourself.

My first boat, the "Icicle", was a simple vee-shaped affair about twelve feet long. I made it from scrap two-by-fours and used the sail rig from my windsurfer for the motive power. The skipper hung in a sling seat made of ma-nilla webbing. It went very well but broke a lot, sometimes at inop-ortune moments.

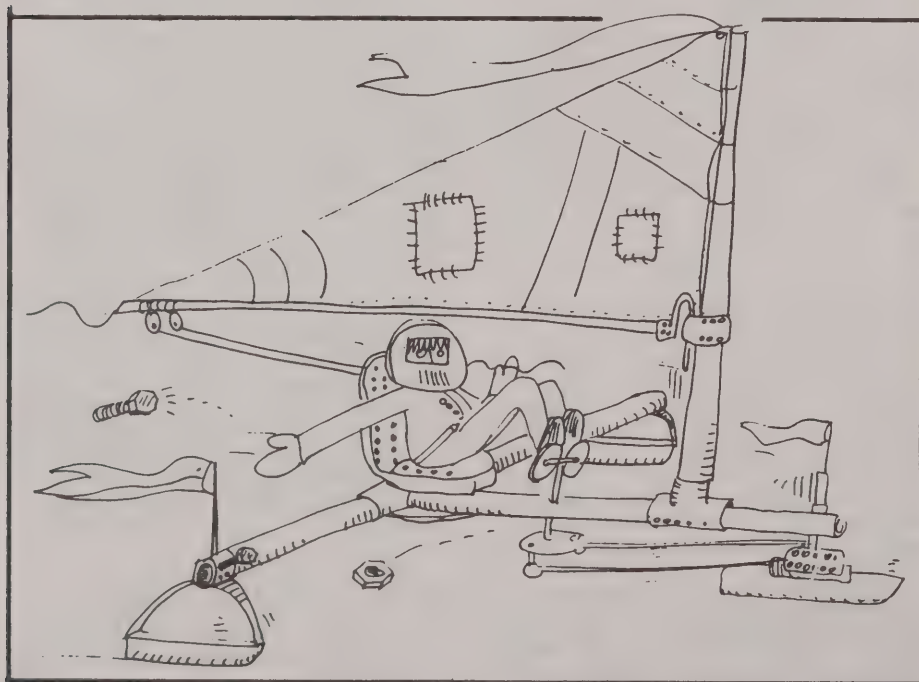
All that first winter we sailed by day and by moonlit night, work-ing out design flaws and putting in various improvements. Our crowd grew as passers-by noticed the act-ivity and were drawn to it. Several other boats showed up and joined the fleet. Ideas of wild inspiration were traded back and forth over hot mugs of coffee, ideas which one week and \$24 later became a speed-ing, ice-born vessel.

As I rumbled around in the frigid winter with ice chips peck-ing at my cheeks, I designed the boat I would build next. This should be a two-seater, I thought, so my wife Cathy and I could ex-plore the coves and islands of our lake in comfort. Speed would take a back seat to utility. It would be semi-enclosed like a convertible sports car, with some cargo capac-ity for a thermos and blanket. I labeled this vision, "Icester Super Deluxe", a roadster for hard water touring.

"Icester" became a reality last winter. The tapered fuselage is an eight-foot long, three-foot wide plywood box with a curved lauan deck. The springboard extends an-other four-feet forward and sup-ports the single steering runner. The cross plank is eight-feet long and supports the two main runners. These runners are made of heavy sign post angle iron, ground to a forty-five degree angle on the deeper side. It is important to have the runners aligned parallel to each other or they'll fight against themselves with every inch of trav-el.

I built in a small trunk with a hinged lid for carrying anything from lunch to a few fishing tip ups. There's a mahogany plywood dashboard which houses an AM/FM radio and a CB, and a place be-tween two middle bulkheads for my alcohol boat heater. It gets so warm in the cockpit that I can take my gloves off on a cold day.

To avoid any twisting force on the fuselage from the leaning of the mast, I borrowed the ball and socket idea used in many tradition-al iceboats. The ball in this case is an old trailer hitch I had in my garage. It's not a \$50 stainless steel jewel, but I dare any amount





of wind to break its little head off. The ball arrangement allows the mast to lean a little, leaving only downward and driving forces to act on the body or the boat. These forces are then transferred by a sub-assembly of plywood and two-by-fours to the sides of the boat. The sides are vertical 1/2" plywood and can handle quite a load.

There is a nifty space between the front of the fuselage and bulk-head #1, so I put in a waterproof hatch, and called it a toolbox. It keeps the racket of bouncing tools way up front where I can't hear it over the roar of the runners on the ice. Having tools with me has saved several long treks across the lake when I needed only a pair of pliers to tighten a stay or a wrench to secure an errant nut somewhere far from home. The toolbox door also gives access to the front part of the wiring harness, in which I left provision for the addition of red and green running lights.

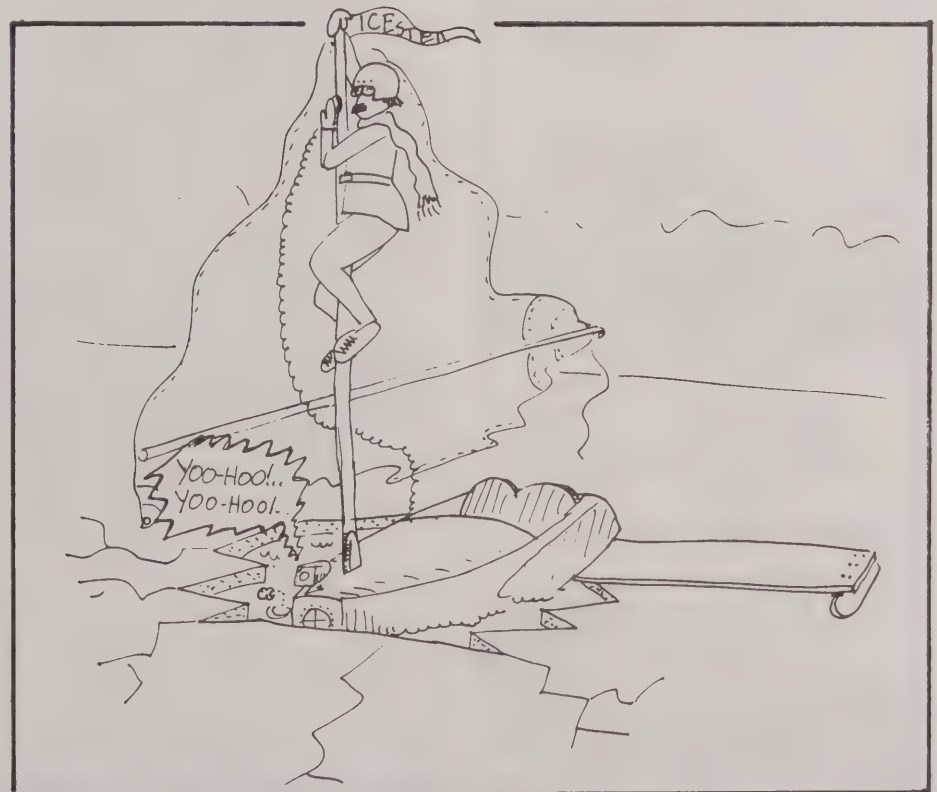
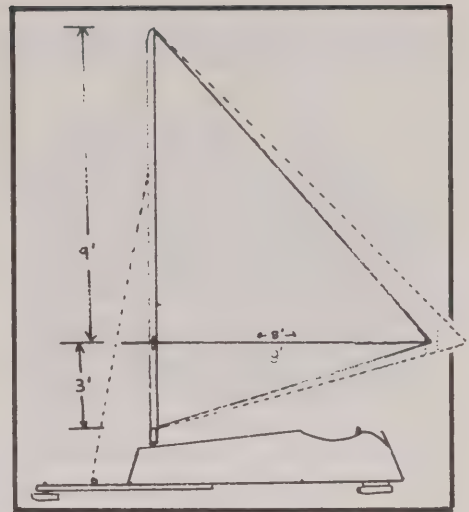
As the CB has a public address feature, I could not resist the temptation to mount a waterproof PA speaker on the front of my craft. This came in handy a few times to hail my friends, warn skaters of my approach, and by holding the mike to the radio speaker during a classical number, to re-enact the helicopter scene from "Apocalypse Now".

It was an immense feeling of accomplishment to have my craft underway for the first time. It was an equally immense feeling to be immediately dismasted and have a cable stay wrapped around my Adam's apple. These things are to be expected in the course of our adventures, however, and I had the problem sorted out shortly. In this sport, with its utter reliance on the ever-changing ice, you never know if it might be the last day of the season, so you fix things fast, or you fix them at leisure over the following long hot summer.

We cruised around the lake last winter while the ice lasted, flitting about with the big boys in the DN's, who constantly showed us their pulley laden tails. We cruised our boats over the vast temporary playground of frozen water, swiftly past the landmarks which seemed so different than in summer, if only because passing them at this greater speed brought them much closer together. We steered our boats at sunset into the cove closest to town, mooring within spitting distance of the local pub. Over cold pitchers we would discuss the facts and fantasies of our day on the lake, sharing feats of speed and daring both real and imagined. Leaving the warmth of the pub, we'd spend hours of the night coasting over pale white snow patches like winged ghosts.

The time of year has come for us to get out our boats, to iron out the wrinkles we've dwelt on through spring and summer and fall. The "Icester" will be improved for this season now upon us, but meanwhile I can't help letting my mind wander off to contemplate another image, one which may never materialize. It is a picture of a long grey teardrop of a boat, topped by twin wishbone rigs. It's an enclosed six-seat ice schooner, tearing across eight miles of frigid upstate lake like a bullet, vanishing into a spray of snow and ice with a flash and a roar on its way to a distant shore.

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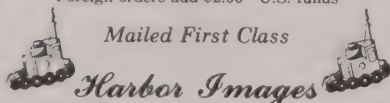
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## Bolger's "Pirogue"

About a year ago I ordered a set of plans for "Pirogue" from Bernie Wolfard of Common Sense Designs. I launched the boat this past May after about ten months of pleasant puttering. This was my second boat...the first, launched the year before, was a Fred Shell 14' "Swiftly". That was built from a kit, and is a nice boat, I might add. I'm glad I went for that longer boat rather than the 12' version Fred advertises.

The primary reason for choosing the "Pirogue" was to have a cartopable alternative to our Easy Rider "Sea Eagle" double kayak for family outings. When our son Scotty was younger, he fit quite nicely into the "Sea Eagle" center hatch. About two years ago he began to outgrow the hatch. Now he wouldn't be caught dead stuffed in to it, he's ten.

The only major tinkering I did with the design was to stretch the sides by 20%. This yielded a boat about 19-1/2' LOA with a 10' cockpit. All other dimensions/proportions remained as designed. Construction was of Taal okoume and Philippine mahogany solids all stuck together with WEST epoxy. I glassed the bottom and primed the rest of the boat with Smith penetrating epoxy prior to painting (hull to sheer) and varnishing (deck and interior). Three seats

were installed at the recommended locations. To provide more leg room forward for the front seat passenger, I opened up the forward bulkhead and added another about a foot forward of that. Access to the fore and aft chambers is provided by 6" screw-in deck plates.

Propulsion to date has been by oars (rows nicely) and 3hp electric motor. The latter is affixed to a detachable side mount. Poking around our nearby coastal marshes and estuaries is most pleasurable in this boat with either form of propulsion. I'm presently working on a rudder and leeboard for sailing...no hurry, I'm the only one in the immediate family who likes that means of propulsion.

To make the boat easier to handle ashore, I built an aft mounting dolly which straddles the skeg. The tires are 10" lawnmower wheels doubled up, four in all. Attachment to the skeg is with a 1/2" pin, no floppy straps. My wife finds this to be the best feature of the boat.

I'm thinking of adding a few options over the winter in addition to the sail rig. One will be a removable canvas tent/deck over the forward cockpit for solo camping. With the front seat removed, I fit quite nicely between the forward bulkhead and center seat (I'm 6'2" tall).

I'm quite impressed with this "simple" boat, because it not only looks good but invites tinkering. Another bow to Phil Bolger. I'm not sure what my next project will be, but there will be one. I am thinking about a low powered motorboat, possibly Chapelle's 18' sharpie camp cruiser described in "Wooden Boat" #82 and pictured in "Wooden Boat" #92.

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## John Bull's "Little Pete"

The Bolger canoe design featured in the September 15th issue prompts me to write about my John Bull canoe of virtually identical model that I built last winter. With about 36 sq. ft. of sail, per Bull's design, this boat is tremendous fun. It is a sailing canoe in the old English fashion, which is to say you sail the boat sitting down, steering with your feet on a rudder bar, and don't sit the boat out on the weather deck. There is much to be said for sailing like this, for not only do you feel like you're going really fast, since the water is only inches from your head, but it is darned comfortable, so much so that I actually dozed off one morning.

The boat's flat bottom allows it to plane on a reach with enough wind, and surf down waves with no loss of control. It also gets along very well with a double paddle. I just finished carving one about 8-1/2' long, a little longer than customary due to the boat's 30" beam and relatively high sides.

The design is called "Little Pete" and is available from John Bull at Solway Dory.

John Summers, 162 Chalmers St., Oakville, ON, Canada L6L 5R9



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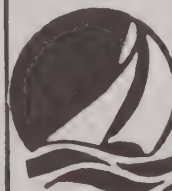
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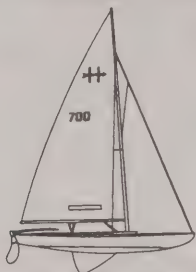
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## From the Boat Shops



## Nelson Silva's Sea Skiffs



Here is a photo of our latest launching, a low sided custom "Sea Skiff" for Peter Jay of Churchville, Maryland, who will use "Eel" for sport fishing and cruising on Chesapeake Bay.

Due to great interest in kit versions of our "Sea Skiffs" we have finally come up with a kit concept that is the ultimate in simplicity. The only tool needed to build one of our kits is a phillips screwdriver. We completely assemble the boat in our shop using no glue in the joints. The kit builder simply takes the boat apart at our shop, transports it home, and fastens and glues it back together, and then sands and finishes in his choice of paint.

My inspiration for such a pre-built kit came from reading a 1901 Fred Martin catalog. Martin's shop built sail and power boats with carvel planking and steamed ribs. After the boats were screwed together, they were then disassembled and shipped by rail to the builders. As an aid to building this kit, I have written a detailed building manual with photographs and the same step-by-step procedure list we use in the shop. Future plans include a videotape of the building process. The approximate gluing and assembly time is 24 to 40 hours. Finishing time can vary greatly depending on the degree of finish desired. We average

about 32 hours for a complete finishing job.

In October we launched another project, the solar powered canal boat "Mog". This project was quite involved. "Mog" has two inboard electric motors powered by a battery bank attached to an array of solar panels. The ingenious design built of wood/epoxy has generous accommodations for two. A full sized head with shower, a galley with propane stove and electric refrigeration, and an air conditioned interior, create a comfortable live-aboard.

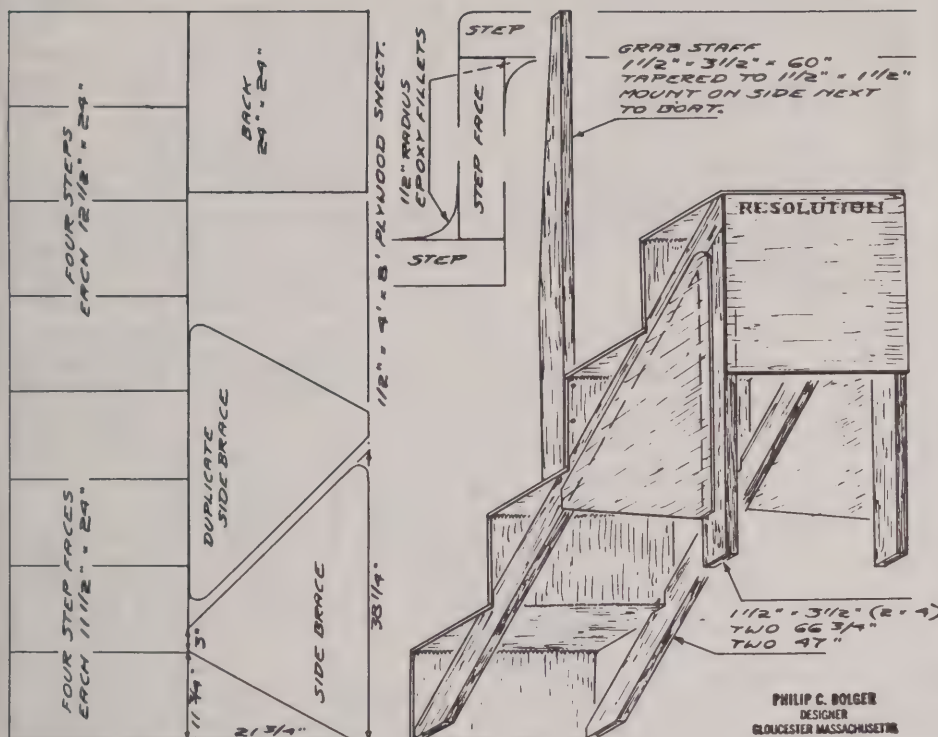
Our current project is a 28' "Smaller Trawler" for Will Foard of Washington, NC. Power will be a Volvo 2003 (28hp) through a 2-1 gear. The hull is being built of C-flex over a wooden male mold. Its shallow draft (2') will be mated to decks and house built of marine plywood/epoxy, providing a roomy interior for two. Cruising speed is expected to be in the 7-8 knot range, and the boat will be cruised on the Intracoastal Waterway, off the Keys and in the Bahamas.

Our six-man crew here at Sea Skiffs, Inc., is grateful to be so busy during this economic downturn and we look forward to a productive 1992.

Nelson Silva, Sea Skiffs, Inc., 7980 Market St., Wilmington, NC 28405, (919) 686-4356.



# Bolger on Design



## Boarding Steps

This set of steps had to accommodate the two-foot difference in draft of my boat and the float she is tied to in her dry-out berth. They required one sheet of 1/2" x 4' x 8' plywood, 24' of dressed 2x4, some epoxy putty, and eight hours of labor; weight finished 55 lbs. The epoxy fillets at the joints of the steps seem to be strong, but the jointing sequence precludes a catastrophic breakdown. The steps are stiff and stable and the grab staff is just the right height and location. I think they are very good looking. Dave Montgomery, who built them, spoke of making another to use in his boat shop; he said he would have shallower steps on his.

PHILIP C. BOLGER  
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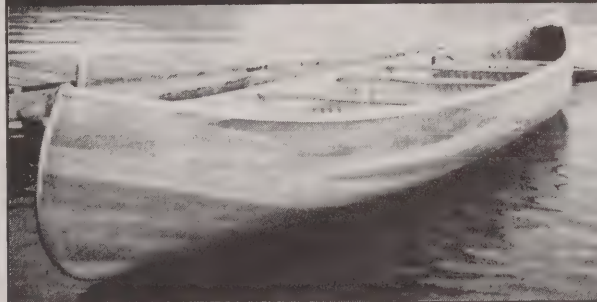
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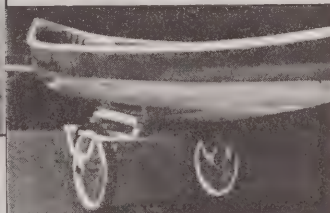
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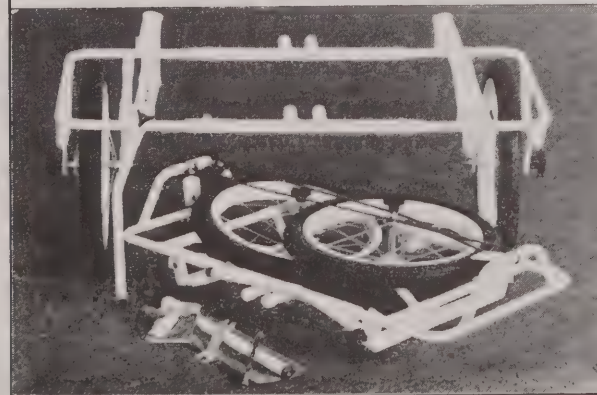
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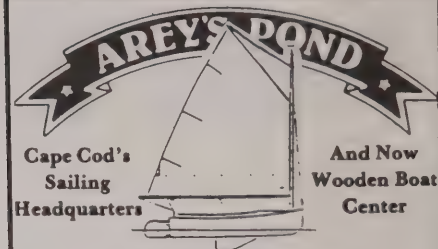
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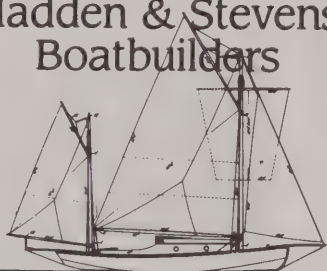
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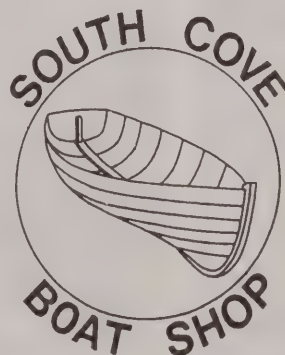
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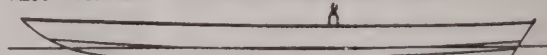


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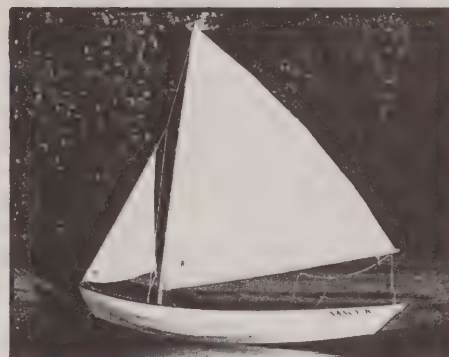
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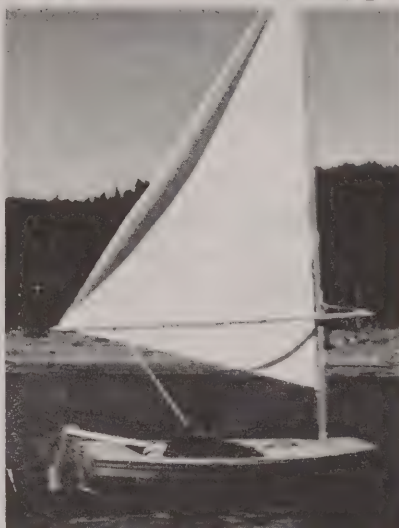
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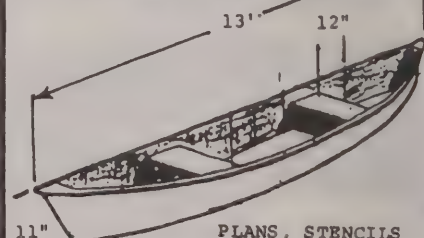
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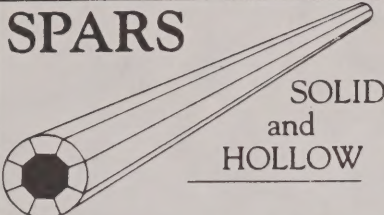
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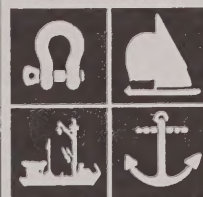
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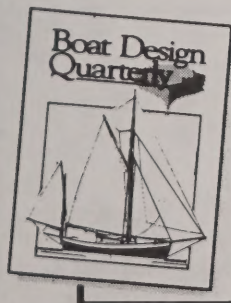
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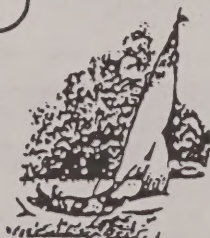
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